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N O B O D A D D Y

Why art thou silent and invisible,
Father of Jealousy?
Why dost thou hide thyself in clouds—

William Blake

N O B O D A D D Y

A Play by

A R C H I B A L D

M A C L E I S H

Cambridge

D U N S T E R H O U S E

M C M

XXXI

NOBODADDY

A Play by

ARCHIBALD
MACLEISH



Cambridge

DUNSTER HOUSE

MCM

XXVI



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N O B O D A D D Y · F O R E W O R D

The literary interpretation of ancient legends as expressions in metaphor of man's experience of nature is so common in our time that any other use of the material requires explanation. In the following poem I have not treated the Hebrew legend of the Garden of Eden as a metaphor. I have not assumed that the legend as a legend symbolizes the accident of human self-consciousness and the resultant human exclusion from nature, animal and inanimate. I have not taken the God of Genesis to be the mysterious universal will which man at that point in his history ceased to understand. I have not seen in Cain the beginning of the human effort to occupy a man-made, man-conscious, universe within or without the other. On the contrary, having to deal with the dramatic situation which the condition of self-consciousness in an indifferent universe seems to me to present, I have appropriated, for its dramatic values, the story of Eden, and given to such of its incidents as I have used an arbitrary significance

F O R E W O R D · N O B O D A D D Y

in the interest of my poem which I am very far from believing them to bear to the anthropologist.

I think it should be added, for the reason, among others, that the emotional experiences treated in the two books are not unlike, that the present poem was written some time before *The Pot Of Earth*.

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

Paris, 1925

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T O N E

The Garden of Eden. Mid-afternoon. A patch of sunny turf rises gently toward a little grass-covered mound at the back upon which stands the tree. It is tall and its leaves are small and thick like birch leaves. The bole where it appears is smooth and perfectly round. Around the open space are crowded masses of tropical and subtropical vegetation mixed with the most north-erly trees and shrubs in elaborate confusion. Climbing vines bearing flowers of great size and strong color sprawl upon the trees and the trees themselves elbow each other aside and down. Among the trunks and roots are fallen branches stained with bright fungi and between grow ferns and more flowers. The sky overhead is a hot thick blue. Adam lies on his back in the full glare of the sun as far from the tree on the right as the open space permits. He is naked and his young body is golden. He is not asleep for occasionally he moves his hands in the air above him like a child but his eyes are closed. For an appreciable period of time there is no sound, not even a rustling of leaves. Then a soft, muted trilling sifts through the air from nowhere in particular. Adam moves but does not lift his head. There is silence again, then a thin, very musical voice equally without apparent origin.

A C T O N E • N O B O D A D D Y

T H E V O I C E :

Adam!

A D A M :

I thought so!

(He twists his body to stare up into the branches of the forest. There is no sound. Adam lets his head fall back upon the grass.)

Now what do you want?

(There is no reply.)

You won't tell—will you? Will you? Well, I
know—

About the—

(He raises his head again and looks uneasily at the tree. Silence.)

So. That's the third time I've heard you.
Third? Maybe more. The first time was the night
I swam across Euphrates and the serpent
Followed me nudging with his horny nose
Between the lily pads. There was a moon
I remember and I could see my hands and legs
Flickering in the water. I was sure
It was the serpent. But then afterwards,
The second time, I was alone, sitting
At sunset on the hill where you can look
Out to the desert and I heard it then
Almost against my ear,—the way a fly

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T O N E

Blunders and buzzes. And now it seems to speak
Inside my head. So that it can't be god
Who shouts tremendous words to me from heaven
And when he speaks shakes all the poplar leaves
In Eden garden. And the snake does go
Like that among the trees, sliding as smooth
As runnels of slow water through the grass.
It still might be the serpent.

THE VOICE: Adam . . . Adam . . .

ADAM:

What do you want?

THE VOICE: Adam, why are you lying
Naked in the hot sun? There stands a tree
Whose leaves sift down a sleepier shadow than
The arbors where the bees are. Lie there, Adam.

ADAM:

No!

THE VOICE: (*softly*)

You are not frightened, Adam?

A D A M :

No. 1

(Silence. Adam swishes at the air with a grass blade. At length the voice begins again in a matter of fact tone which soon drags into mockery.)

A C T O N E · N O B O D A D D Y

THE VOICE :

Adam, how long now have you lived in Eden
Bathing at morning where the waters pool
And spill through their four channels to the wall,
And eating grapes and lettuces and sleeping
All afternoon among the sunny ferns,
Or running with the foxes whose white teeth
Snap at the butterflies—and never going
Nearer the tree? How long?

ADAM :

I cannot tell.
How can I tell how many days go by?
Down one side of the garden—up the other—
Always the same sun ; always the same
Sunset and sunrise ! Except that sometimes Eve
Lets me alone and sometimes she runs after
Until I beat her. Eve is not the same.
But how can I tell how many ? I forget.

THE VOICE :

And shall I tell the number, Adam ?

ADAM :

More
Than all the—all the leaves upon the fig there.

THE VOICE :

More, more than they are, Adam. More, even more
Than all the numberless leaves in Eden, Adam.

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T O N E

ADAM:

It has been long—

THE VOICE:

And still you do not dare so much as walk
Under the tree?

ADAM:

There are other trees in Eden.

THE VOICE:

And as for the apples of the tree—the apples—?

ADAM:

I am not hungry.

THE VOICE:

Still you dare not, Adam.

A D A M :

Well then I dare not. Neither do I dare
Eat the red poppy. Neither do I dare
Suck bitter-sweet. I do not wish to die.
Leave me alone.

THE VOICE:

Who told you you would die?

A C T O N E · N O B O D A D D Y

A D A M :

Who? Why the gardener,— god. Who else
could know?

He made me out of dust. He can unmake
Flesh into dust as quickly.

(There is a long ripple of almost inaudible laughter. Then silence. Then the Voice again, stronger and clearer.)

T H E V O I C E :

Cannot, Adam.

Cannot undo what he has done, untie
One knot of his creation, think again
One moment he has thought. Have you not seen
How in the morning he obeys his sun
To come into his orchard, and how slow
He follows his slow seasons round the wall?
Have you not seen how sometimes he has failed
And would go back but cannot? There are things
Crawling beneath the stones and under earth,
White stinging worms and venomous soft slugs,
That were to be as lovely as the quick
Green lizards. Have you not seen him look
Turning a stone up in his gardening
As though he would destroy
the world and then
Let down the stone as gently as he drops

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T O N E

Earth on his seedlings? Have you not watched
him work
All day to keep the briars from his beds
And seen at dusk the flowering of the thorn?
Have you not seen it, Adam?

A D A M : I have seen
His Behemoth, his monster, fall and die
Among the reeds where Hiddekel flows out.

THE VOICE;

Ah, did you see it ! Wonderful ! What apple
Had god forbidden him to eat ? You fool !
Behemoth was his greatest and god loves
His greatest most. Ten thousand years he grew
Lifting his stupid head above the palms,
And then, because it rained one summer, died.
And when god found him he would not believe
The bones were Behemoth.

A D A M : But still he died.

THE VOICE:

But still he died. Yes, and the sun itself
Will die some day—in spite of god.

A D A M : Listen !

(There is a sound far away like the sound of slow, enormous steps.)

A C T O N E · N O B O D A D D Y

T H E V O I C E :

He walks among his olive trees to pluck
The spotted and sick fruit. Even among
His olive trees he fails sometimes.

A D A M :

Be quiet.

If he should call to me—

T H E V O I C E :

He cannot hear us.
And if he did he would not understand
Two words together.

(The voice breaks off laughing softly.)

His sense is always filled
And ringing with the rumour of small leaves,
And drip of water sifting through the ground,
And stir of earth where the young seedling heaves
Its tip to sunlight, and the swarming sound
The wind makes in the meadow grass that weaves
Sound over movement and runs down the green
Flashing and singing and yet never seen.

(The words end in a run of laughter.)

He never listens to me. He never hears me
Anymore than the grass hears moonlight.

A D A M :

But he can speak

And when I hear the wings of his voice beat up

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T O N E

Into the sky and circle hunting me—
I am afraid.

T H E V O I C E :

Afraid ! Like a leaf in thunder—
Like a poplar tree ! But you are not a tree :
You are a man, made out of flesh and bone—
You might be more than flesh and bone.

A D A M :

What more ?

T H E V O I C E :

What more ! What is there more ?

A D A M :

What could I be ?

T H E V O I C E :

A god, my Adam. Oh, not such as he
Who gardens in this Eden vale and made
Before he planted Eden the great earth
And set the solemn sun to roll in heaven,
And now in all things living pushes on
A muddy purpose to blind burrowing ends
He cannot see before. Not such as he
Who made in his own image the wise ant
That has no wisdom and the sagacious bee
That does not know it knows. But you, my Adam,
You might be god. You might be god in truth.
You have that in you Adam which could build

A C T O N E · N O B O D A D D Y

Out of this earth of his another earth,
That should stand over this as this exceeds
The wish he made it of.

A D A M :

I build a world !
I cannot reach the lowest of the stars,
I cannot even look into the sun.

T H E V O I C E :

But if you ate the apple, Adam, if
You rebelled and ate the apple—

A D A M :

Should I be
Strong enough then to stare into the light?
Should I see farther then?

T H E V O I C E :

Ah, you would see—

A D A M :

What should I see?

T H E V O I C E :

You would see Adam—

A D A M :

Adam !

I can see Adam here upon this grass,
That toe that moves is Adam and this hand
Is Adam's hand that touches Adam's knee.

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T O N E

T H E V O I C E :

You would see Adam naked in the sun,
Young Adam beautiful and naked standing
Under the yellow sun defying god,
Adam that was a beast, that in his brain
Had only fear and want, defying god,
Adam that shall be dead and through the dark
Go down he knows not where, defying god.
You would see more than Adam. You would see
In Adam's eyes Eve you have never seen,
Eve desirable, Eve with the strange breast,
Eve to answer you with silence in the night
When the stars march and there are no words to say.

A D A M :

If I rebel—against him—. He is kind.
He made this garden for me and he raised
My flesh to walk in it—

T H E V O I C E : *(suddenly intense)*

And in your skull
Twisted the roots and fibers of a vine
That should grow over heaven beautiful
Along the quickening sky and intertwine
With sun and moon and stars its clear design
Of understanding : but forbade it room
In all his Eden to break leaf and bloom.
You have that in you which could build a world

A C T O N E · N O B O D A D D Y

I tell you Adam, but he keeps it here
Bound in the darkness of your body, curled
Still in the seed and knotted up with fear
To build within the rind that binds it phantoms
Of hunger and impossible gnarled forms
Of dread at nightfall, and unnamable dreams
That waking you remember. Split the husk
Adam, that buries you in earth ! Put out
Leaves to the sunlight ! Put out leaves and climb
Skies he has never known—and if he may
Let him destroy you.

(The voice breaks off abruptly. Adam lies face down on the grass. There is silence for a moment, then a rustling of leaves and Eve enters from the forest at the left dragging a flowering branch behind her. She has the body of a young girl. She is beautiful but she walks with hanging head and her tangled hair falls from her shoulders across her small breast. As Adam begins to speak she sees him and draws back, frightened, listening.)

A D A M :

I am afraid, afraid.

I am afraid to die—to lie alone
As Behemoth lay lonely in the reeds:
He lay all night alone. And jackals came
And ate his flesh at night. And in the morning
The flies clung stinging to his flanks and beetles

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T O N E

Crawled on his lips. But Behemoth lay still.
He did not move. He did not hear when god
Sent out his voice through Eden naming him.
He did not see the sun burning his eyes
That stared stark upward. In the day you eat
In that day shall you surely die. That day !
I am afraid to die.

E V E :

(She kneels on the grass a little behind Adam.)

No, No, No. Adam,
Not die ! You shall not die ! What are you saying ?
Why do you lie here talking to yourself ?
He is not here. I saw his hands among
The pomegranates touching the round fruit
And smoothing back the leaves. They will be ripe
Tomorrow. O, Adam, there are little buds
Under the apple trees like little apples
But green and bitter. And his hands were gentle
Parting the thick leaves. And as brown, browner
Than earth you turn up with your oyster shells.
His eyes were brown too, Adam. But they looked
As though they did not see me, or as though
They saw me very far away and small,
Or like the stalk of something underground
They saw inside me. And I picked a spray
Of scarlet flowers where the cypress leans

ACT ONE · NOBODADDY

Over Euphrates. See how big they are.

Look! Why don't you look?

A D A M : I've heard—the serpent,
The serpent saying terrible small words
That would not let me be.

EVE: What did he say?

ADAM:

Terrible things.

E V E : But what? How terrible?

What did he say of me? What have you done?

'To make him angry with you? I bring milk

When I remember in a cocoanut

And leave it for him underneath the tree

Where I have seen him sleep. And so he

loves me,

And once he coiled three times around my thigh

And then around my waist and drew himself

As cool as water upward till he lay

Watching me with his head between my breasts.

His eyes were like pools that after a spring rain

Catch the low sunlight—golden. What did he say?

Tell me—what did he say?

ADAM:

I am a god!

Eve, do you hear, a god.

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T O N E

E V E :

A god? You? You!

You are brown Adam and your beard is soft
As lamb's wool, and sometimes you hurt my skin
Pinching me, and sometimes you lie as still
Beside me as the little wood mice lie
Beside a warm stone.

A D A M : (*The Voice seems to speak from his mouth.*)

I am a god.

I say I am a god. And I shall build
A world above this hollow world that holds
Under its bubble Eden that will rise
Beyond this like a cloud and vault its skies
Over his heaven where at night he folds
The dark around him and the winds lie stilled.
I shall build up a world that will enclose
His world within it as the curving leaves
Of lilies hold a rain drop, and I'll set
Such stars above his stars you will forget
There was a star in heaven till the bright sheaves
Of mine were gathered in the field that grows
East of the evening.

(*Adam sits motionless, his eyes staring at nothing. Eve looks at him with awe.*)

E V E :

When shall I see these stars?

A C T O N E · N O B O D A D D Y

A D A M :

(After a pause and speaking again in his own voice.)
When I rebel. When I rebel and eat.

E V E :

No, Adam, No. The day we eat we die.
In that day shall you surely die—

A D A M :

The serpent
Has said I shall not die.

E V E :

And god has said
Upon the day you eat thereof—

A D A M :

But yet
He may not kill me.

E V E :

May not ! God may not—
Not kill ! Why may he not ? Have you not heard
As many times almost as there are beasts
He made in Eden how each one was made,
How easily, from dust ? May he not crumble
Dust ?

A D A M : *(He speaks at first, frightened, and haltingly. Then his words gather strength and the Voice speaks again through his mouth.)*

But he may not—I have forgotten, Eve—
There is a something—time—a something—shadows

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T O N E

That crawl around a hill—before and after—
After upon before—he thinks like that,
Not the way we think when we let our minds
Fall as a pebble falls in deep water
So that our hands before our eyes are things
That we remember long, long, long ago,
And things long past, the hot smell by the river
That summer day, the wakening of birds
That woke us then, are all about us. God
Thinks as the sun goes and his thoughts of time
That wash around us rippling into foam
Over the shoulders of our dreams compel him—
He cannot turn—

(The Voice fails.)

The serpent told me— —he cannot—I forget—

E V E :

If the serpent lied—

A D A M :

The serpent did not lie. I knew his words
Before he spoke them. It was god who lied.
He knew that if we ate we should be gods
Stronger than he is, and so because he feared us
Said—what he said. The serpent did not lie.
But—I forget—

E V E :

If we should take just one
And taste it, only taste it. Do you see

A C T O N E · N O B O D A D D Y

Where two grow together? He would never know
There had been two there.

A D A M :

Listen! A leaf moved—
Look, on the farthest branch—

E V E :

A sleepy bird
Would shake them preening there. Are you afraid
The birds will tell him?

(Adam rises and goes slowly across to the tree. As he puts out his hand toward it a puff of wind ripples the leaves and the low boughs sway. He starts back.)

A D A M :

Eve, Eve, did you see
The bough draw back from me? There was a hand
That moved within the green, and twisted back
The branch I reached to—did you see it, Eve?

E V E :

I saw the wind run through the leaves the way
The winds have blown in Eden since the first
Wind blew.

A D A M : *(Still staring at the tree.)*

And back of it, back of it, his eyes
Watching me when the branch was bent away—
I saw his eyes there, Eve.

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T O N E

E V E :

He was not there.

He never comes till dusk below the pools
Into the forest.

A D A M :

It was like his hand—
Something that pulled the branch away from me
When I had almost eaten. Do you see,
Eve, it is growing dusk—

E V E :

But we would hear him.
We would hear him walking over the dry leaves.
There is still time. Break off the small fruit there
Nearest the branch's end.

A D A M :

I am afraid.
There are black shadows gathering in the wood
That watch me and the wind is listening—

E V E :

If you would only touch it with your hand
It would fall down. Quick, Adam !

A D A M :

Ah, I cannot.
My fingers twist away from it. They know
Things that the serpent hid. Look, it is pale
As swollen mushrooms—

A C T O N E · N O B O D A D D Y

E V E :

When you are a god
You will not be afraid. No! Let me go!

(She throws off Adam's hand and passes him. The light is fading in the forest and the shadows are deepening. Above in the western sky a faint color gathers against which the curious outline of the tree is accentuated. Eve draws down the nearest branch and picks the fruit which, still holding the branch, she bites. For a moment she stands without movement, then holds out the fruit to Adam who hesitatingly takes what she offers him and puts it to his mouth.)

E V E :

We do not die—we do not change at all—
And Eden does not change. And I am still
Eve—only smaller. Why do you stare at me
As though you'd never seen me until now?
You make me shiver with your looking eyes—
I am not different.

A D A M :

But you are as strange
As when the panther creeping through the moon
From shadow into shadow all at once
Shows black against the glare. You were my flesh,
Eve that was taken from my side, familiar
As my own hands. Now—Now you are still

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T O N E

Eve, but not my flesh now. You have become
Only yourself, not mine, not anything
But only Eve. And now I see you—Eve.
I see you like a panther in the moon
Suddenly clear.

E V E : But I am still your flesh.
Feel me. I am the same.

Only to touch your hands that make me feel
My own two hands against them, and your arms
That are more smooth than mine
and your deep thighs
That free my body of you, and your breasts
That set me free—to find you. Oh, to find you—
Eve, do not go away.

A C T O N E • N O B O D A D D Y

E V E :

Why do you say

I am not part of you, not you—your flesh?
What can I be if I am not your flesh?
You shall not make another thing of me.
You look at me as though I were some marvel
God had created new until I feel
Your eyes against my skin and wish for leaves
To cover me.

A D A M :

You can be Eve. You are
Eve and not Adam, Adam's other self
And therefore not himself. We are not earth
Although the dust of earth is in us. Trees
Clinging against the body of the earth
And drawing up her blood into their veins
And letting fall their leaves to her can know
Nothing of what she is, but you and I
Because we are not earth can sift her flesh
Between our fingers, as my fingers feel
The bones within your wrists that are not mine
Because they are not mine, because they are
Eve. Eve! Oh, lift up your eye.. Eve, look at me.

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T T W O

The same. Twilight. The sky is transparent with a colorless light that fades gradually. Adam sits, his back against the bole of the tree, scratching in the dust with a dry twig. Eve lies, face upward, on the grass beside him. Her laughter, delighted, derisive, like the laughter of a small child, rises, breaks off. Adam speaks, pausing from time to time to examine his work.

A D A M :

And then—then camel—camel balancing
His head above him on his solemn neck—
As if it were not his.

E V E :

Poor camel walking
The way he once had seen god walk but with
Four legs, not two, to walk on.

A D A M :

And behind him
Elephant—

E V E :

Elephant whom god had dreamed
Two nights together.

A D A M :

Elephant putting down
His four soft feet as if he were not sure
He'd find the earth beneath him.

ACT TWO · NOBODY DADDY

E V E :

And then lion,

Then roaring lion—

ADAM:

With a tail—

EVE;

And with

A hair tuft at the end of it.

A D A M :

And then—

What was there then?

E V E :

Then birds. Then fish. Then—

ADAM:

Ibis:

Old ibis perched upon his one pink stalk
Letting the rain fall.

E V E :

Like the vegetables

That let the rain beat on them and the sun
Stare in their faces.

A D A M :

Or hold out a bud

Or three white berries to him or a pod
Of beans—

E V E :

As though he saw them.

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T T W O

A D A M :

The round sun?

He cannot see. He has no eyes to see with.
But the moon—the moon can see us. I have watched
The moon's face. You are like the moon, Eve. Look.
Look at me. You have circles in your eyes,
Circles of blue that close and open. Now—
Now they are open. And now you look at me
They close again.

E V E :

And your eyes, Adam, yours
Have small bright faces in them and they nod
When I nod.

A D A M :

When you turn, your throat—

E V E :

And now
They're gone again. No, look at me. And now—
How can I see them, Adam, when you make me
Cover my eyes?

A D A M :

I do not make you. Look now!

Are you afraid to see my eyes so near?
Then do not look. Your eyelids are so smooth, Eve.
Can you not see still when your eyes are closed?
Can you not shut your eyes and see? I'll lie here
Blinding my face upon your breast and still,

A C T T W O · N O B O D A D D Y

Still see you, see you walk, see how your heels
Lift from the pressed grass, and the slow grass lifts
Straightening after you. There was a time
When I could only see with eyes, when darkness
Closed as my eyes closed.

E V E :

And there was a time
When you would look at me with both your eyes
And never see me, Adam.

A D A M :

Eve, I did not.
Yes. I know too well I did. Or if
I saw you I would turn my head away
Ashamed, because—I do not know—because
You ran—the way you ran, because you wore
Ivy leaves, flowers. But that was long ago.
That was before—

E V E :

Before the sunset, Adam?

A D A M :

No. Before the world was. Before even
We saw ourselves first standing face to face
Seeing we saw.

E V E :

And that was—when, my Adam?
Before the sun set.

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T T W O

A D A M :

And between is all
Our lives' length, Eve. Between is all of time
That has been time to us, that was not only
Now and still Now, still Now, the everlasting
Now that contained us as it still contains
The wolves, the leopards for whom days go by
All as one day goes.

E V E :

But it is not long.

It is not night yet. Still in the pale sky
The day remembers something that still fades
And lets the stars shine through. And I can think
Back of your kisses, Adam. And my hands
Are older than the touch of yours. They know
Shapes I have half forgotten. They can do
Things they have done that I have lost the names of.
My hands remember, Adam, as the leaves
Of trees remember the old sound of rain
Opening. Have you forgotten? Think now.
Think, Adam—

A D A M :

Not...forgotten. Yet I see
As though I saw through sleep now, under sleep,
As under water I have seen blurred shapes
Of shadow gather and dissolve, I see
Sleep, faces in sleep, the darkened faces,

A C T T W O · N O B O D A D D Y

The muzzles blunted with dumb hair, the no
Eyes—I cannot look into their eyes—
And yet I knew them. Once, once long ago,
Before the sun went down, before I was
Adam—I knew them then. And they could hear me.
And I could speak although there were no words
To speak with then. All morning I would lie
Lost in the grasses on some deer-grazed hill
And hear the beetles in the earth, and birds
Pass, and clover heavy bees, and smell
The moist roots under me, and feel the smooth
Pebbles that pressed against my skin, and know them,
And know them all—as though there were not I
That knew and they that I had known, but all
One, one knowledge, earth and root and air
And sunlight and the blur of wings and beasts
Moving beside me, in me, like the dreams
Of beast and bird that troubled in my dumb
Sun-sluggish blood. And now, as though I woke
And staring backward into sleep beheld
Faces I knew there, faces I had known,
And knew them now no longer, but the earth
That once had opened to me and the trees,
The grass that grew up out of me, the stones
That touched me with their bodies, were all strange,
All dangerous, all secret,—now I fear them.

NOBODY DADDY • ACT TWO

None but ourselves now, only we that wake.
There are no others that can hear as we do
The darkness listening, and where we see
The sky fade into nothing, see the sky
Fade. No others, none, not even god
That wake with us, and we, we dare not sleep.

EVE:

If he should come now—Adam, he is kind.
His hands among the olive trees were kind.

ADAM;

If he should come—

EVE i

He would not kill us, Adam.

A D A M :

If he should come now he would know, he'd find us :
Here in the darkness, in the night : the night
Knows, the darkness—

E V E :

He is kind.

A D A M :

He made

Those masks of dumbness, unremembering eyes,

ACT TWO · NOBODADDY

Mouths that cry out in sleep, the tongueless mouths
That cry and far off cry again and farther
Cry and none answer.

E V E : We have heard them call
Before in Eden. And we laughed and made
Noises to frighten them.

A D A M : And now we do not.
And now we— we fear. We are afraid now. We
That know each other know we are alone—
And fear. Because they hide from us. Because,
There at the muffled edge of sleep, they hear
Our voices and are silent. O because
They all are silent. And the earth, the trees,
The tree-bones upright in the earth whose frail
Flesh is dissolved in darkness, the faint green,
All silent, all, all silent, and the sky
Gone and deep silence over us. I hear
The tread of the feet of one who walks
with silence
One walking and no sound. I hear him come.
Eve, he is coming.

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T T W O

A D A M :

I hear his feet now. Eve, I hear
His feet like wingstrokes of the unseen bird,
Like throb of water falling far, far off
When no sound follows, like the jar of stones
Rolling in swollen rivers that our hands
Hear. Look Eve! The trees, the trees have heard him.
The grass hears, Eve. The whole night waits for him.
How shall we answer, Eve?

E V E :

Only the wind
High overhead above the boughs and in
The treetops the small gnats that rise and fall
And rise on shallow ripples of the air
That fail there lapsing.

A D A M :

Wind, wind overhead,
And here no wind blows. Here the one oak leaf
That blots upon its broken edge the star
Is still as stars are. Even the air sleeps
And like a dream of wind the wind goes by
Unfelt here. Eve, we two are two that wake
Within sleep's country, waking dreams within
The numbness of dark sleep, and in that land
Behind the silence that still hides them, hear
Murmur of sleeping lips, the soundless tread

A C T T W O · N O B O D A D D Y

Of one that walks in sleep there, one that comes
Close and still closer, one that walks, that stands
Now at my side, before me—and no sound,
No foot-fall, no least breath of wind. Silence.
Between us waking and his mouth of sleep
Silence. And yet he hears me. Yet he stands
Listening—

E V E : Adam, lift your head and look.
He is not there. He has forgotten us.
Bat voices like the glint of fireflies
Nearer and farther in the dark. The moon
Blurs the low stars already. Come. Lie here.
Lie here beside me, Adam.

A D A M : Eyes ! The eyes !
Eyes I can see that watch me, the apes' eyes
Of stars, the staring moon now. And the eyes
I cannot see that watch me, all their eyes,
Their lidded eyes. And his closed eyes that see me
Though they close—

E V E : Adam, why do you stand there ?
You frighten me alone against the stars.
Come and lie down beside me. We will hide
From the moonlight under the dry ferns. I'll close
Your eyelids with my fingers and I'll say

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T T W O

Such words so softly, Adam, you'll forget
That there are stars. Come, Adam. Come to me.

A D A M :

Where shall we lie in Eden? The soft grass
That bears our bodies, the weak leaves, the cold
Leaves that touch us, they will know, they will not
Take us and cover us. Even earth will know
Feeling our secret weight upon her, even
Earth torpid with sleep will know us. Where then,
Where shall we lie? How, how shall we rest?
How shall we rest beneath his eyes, how close
Our ears against his silence?

Look! the moon
Goes upward and the huddling trees withdraw
Their darkness from me. And no word. No sound.
And still with sleeping eyes he watches me.

*(Adam walks through the moonlight to the edge
of the forest. He stands facing the dark trees.
There is no sound. Suddenly he speaks in a loud
voice.)*

Why do you stand there silent? Here am I.
Here am I, I, Adam. I am here.
O seek no more, no nearer seek for me,
No nearer—

E V E :

He does not speak. I tell you, Adam,

A C T T W O · N O B O D A D D Y

He is not there. He is not.

(Adam does not turn. The stillness after the sound of his voice is unbroken.)

A D A M :

I was afraid.

I heard your feet far off. I was afraid
And I was naked and I hid myself.
Look, in the moon's light—I am naked, bare,
Hairless, uncovered, naked. Seek no more—
No nearer—

E V E :

There is no one there, no one.
Yet the trees are still, so still that they will move
If I should turn my head away. And the stones
Motionless—

A D A M :

What must I say to you, what word?
What do you wait for me to say? Must I
Speak—into silence? Must I cry my sin
Into the dark, into the silence, under
The blank moon?—And no answer?

E V E :

No, no, Adam.
What are you saying, Adam? When I hear
Your own voice far away upon the hills

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T T W O

Shout your own words to you, and then again,
And farther, fainter, your own words, and then
Nothing, I know we are alone. I know
He does not hear you : but I am afraid—
Of nothing—of the silence—

A D A M :

Must I speak
Before you slay me?

(There is no sound.)

Hear then. Hear my words.
Lord, I have sinned! Hear me. I have eaten
Of the tree whereof you said I should not eat.

(There is no sound.)

Will you not answer me? Can you not hear
My voice within your silence? You that sleep,
Will you not answer me?

(Adam stands motionless, listening. There is no sound. Eve speaks at last almost in a whisper.)

E V E :

Or is it we
That cannot hear—

A D A M :

I do not know. The trees
Seem to have heard him and the earth is sealed,
Silenced against us, and the small white moon
Looks down as though she feared us.

A C T T W O • N O B O D A D D Y

E V E :

Let us go.

O let us go now, Adam. There are lands
Beyond the wall where no trees grow, no leaves,
No living things. And we can see the sky there
And all night hear the wind. And we can sleep.

A D A M :

I have forgotten how to find the ways
In darkness.

E V E :

Ways—there are no ways for us.
The dark goes with us secretly. The moon
Follows. And he too follows. O make haste,
Go quickly, Adam.

A D A M :

Eve, where are you, Eve—

(They go out. The sound of their feet dies away.)

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T T H R E E

The desert east of Eden. A field surrounded by a low stone wall. A stunted gray tree grows at the right. At the left is a large boulder of irregular mass with an uneven top surface. Behind the walls bare ground stretches sandy and flat to barren hills. Cain, a man of about thirty-five, skin-clad and burned by the sun, is digging with a clumsy spade in the earth at the right. As he works, Eve, old and browned, with a wolf hide strapped around her middle, comes to the wall at the right, and, crossing, goes to the little tree where she sits down. Cain does not look up. After a pause Eve speaks.

E V E :

The ground is very dry here, Cain.

C A I N :

Yes. Dry.

E V E :

There was a cloud this morning in the west
Back of the hills.

C A I N :

I saw it.

E V E :

Over Eden.

A C T T H R E E · N O B O D A D D Y

(Cain makes no reply. Eve is silent for a time and then continues.)

Your brother saw it when he drove his sheep
Down to the water hole. There was no water.
And so he drove them back where I would see them
Hanging their dusty tongues out of their mouths.
He said it rained—beyond there.

C A I N :

Perhaps it did.

E V E :

He asked me if there were not streams in Eden.

C A I N :

Did he? Well, let him go and look.

E V E :

He's always

Thinking of Eden. Do you remember, Cain,
The way he used to ask when he was little
Each morning if we could go back that day?
And then when he grew up he would not ask me,
But I could feel his eyes looking as though
I'd taken something from him—he did not know
What I had taken.

C A I N :

Abel's not like us.

He fears the moon. And when the nights are dark
He goes out hunting with his bare hands

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T T H R E E

Among the leopards. He is more a leopard
Than he is like a man. You must not grieve
For any look of Abel's.

E V E :

He is strange.

He seems to understand strange things, like trees
And water. But he cannot speak the words
For what he knows. Perhaps he does not know
But only feels them someway.

C A I N : (*He looks up for the first time.*)

As you did, Eve?
Was it like that before—

E V E :

No. No. Don't ask me,
Don't ask that, Cain. I think of it, I think of it;
All night alone I think of it. To remember!
If I remembered! If I should fall back
Into the pool I seem to lean above,
Balancing, back into myself, into this,
My body, down and down into my body—
You cannot understand that, Cain, you cannot.

C A I N : (*Digging as he talks.*)

No, I was never anything but Cain
Whatever Cain may be. I cannot touch
The earth as Abel touches it. Sometimes

ACT THREE · NOBO DADDY

Digging my rows I find a growing root
And pick it up and feel it: heavy—firm—
Living. Taste it: salt—sweet. I finger it,
I wish to mix with it, to know it, think it.
Well, I cannot. It denies me. There it is
Motionless, dumb, asleep at the ends of my
fingers,

Against my tongue and it denies me. So,
I am a man. My mind is not like Abel's
That knows nothing and knows what I cannot guess.
My mind is not a tree's mind. I am a man.
I think. But not as Abel, not as a tree.
I think about myself. I think of my thoughts.
I think of things that I can see. Of things
I remember. I think, what are these things I see?
Why are they? Meaning, why to me, to Cain.
And so they do not answer me. They cannot.
They cannot understand. They understand
Abel for god is in him and he thinks
As god thinks without knowledge, and god is in
These things I question. God is like the sap
Running in corn and grass and trees and brambles
That does not know itself but somehow knows
How it must run. His thought is like the sap.
He thinks within the trees and they grow up.
He thinks in Abel and so Abel hunts
At night with leopards or lies all day long

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T T H R E E

As though he were a stone among the stones
That seem to talk together—if we heard them.
But god is not in me. He does not know me.
Nor I know him. If I should find his thought
It would be numb to me as roots are.

E V E :

Yes,
His words would darken in your ears, my son,
But you would know him. If you saw him come
Looming against the stars at night or heard
His voice, not far away as you have heard it
But near and terrible, your heart would know him.
You have not faced him, Cain.

C A I N :

I've seen his earth—
As well as I can see it, seeing only
With eyes and with no more. Since I could break
The clods that Adam turned up with his spade,
And pull at thorns I have been fighting earth
To make her feed us. My two hands are scarred
With digging and my feet are stained. I know
There is no speech between us. What she gave
You as her children she refuses now,
Now we are not her children. We are men,
Beggars for food—because we think as men.
Sometimes at sunset when the shadows change

A C T T H R E E · N O B O D A D D Y

And near things seem far off and the faint light
Is clear as though there were no sky, I stand
Letting my hands work down into the soil,
Letting my thought blow round me like a leaf,
Fluttering, and I dream a sort of dream.
I dream the earth tilts under and I turn
Sidewise and outward, turning from the earth,
Until I see before me—or behind—
I cannot tell, for still my hands work down
Into this crumbling soil—another land,
A land as though it were myself made earth,
Rising in hills and sweeping on, myself,
Not this, this earth, this desert, but myself.
I think that I have gone into that land,
Eve, and can never come again. I think
We all are in that land but only Abel
For whom no ways go outward. And between
That land and this that god has made, there is
No speech, no word, no meaning.

E V E :

But your hands

Cling to his earth, my son. I know. I know.
When first we came here after Adam's will
To build new worlds in Eden broke and he
Walked as he still walks now with frightened eyes
Fixed on the ground, or sat beside the fire
Staring at nothing, I had dreams like yours,

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T T H R E E

Dreams that reached outward. But I have
grown old.

My dreams strike down into the dust. I stand
Under the sun, between the sun and earth,
Bounded by earth, and earth shall have my bones,
Cain, as it shall have yours.

C A I N :

Well, let it ask
My bones for answer. Let it have my bones.
It gets no more from me than that, no more
Than what he made me of, no more than dust.
He is the god of dust; well, let him rule it.
I am not dead things only. I am Cain.
I do not fear him.

E V E :

He could kill you.

C A I N :

Yes,
He could have killed me. He could kill me now.

E V E :

You have no other god.

C A I N :

I have myself.

E V E :

Yourself! You cannot bring the rain. You cannot
Save out poor sheep that die with swollen tongues

A C T T H R E E · N O B O D A D D Y

Choking for water. You cannot even find
Drink for our own dry mouths. You are a god !
You are a mighty god !

C A I N :

The drouth is his
But I can pity the poor beasts that die ;
He cannot.

E V E :

Can you pity your poor flesh
When you die too ?

C A I N :

I need not if I die.
I do not know, Eve, if I die or not.
I have seen ways that seemed to climb and climb
As if they climbed forever. I do not know.
But even if I die, even if he kill me,
Even if my thoughts of what I am are like
The colors that the sun makes on a sky
Where night shall follow, still I am the god,
Godhood is in me blossoming. Not dread,
Not awe, not power over suns and stars,
But godhood, godhood to be pitiful,
Godhood to laugh,— to see my body's shadow
Wriggling and jerking on the quiet earth
And laugh at it and pity my own laughter
And so be god.

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T T H R E E

E V E :

You are a proud man, Cain,
Standing half-naked on the earth that bore you
To talk of pity. I am sick of pride !
Adam was proud and would have been the god
Of a new Eden. Now he never speaks
And never lifts his head up and at night
He clings to me among the leaves until
Sleep hides him from himself. And you are proud,
Prouder than Adam. You would make yourself
More than a god of gardens. You would be
Cain and pluck up your roots from the soft earth
To have no life but Cain. I am afraid
More of your pride than Adam's. You are mine—
My son—and I am daughter of the earth,
And earthy things are in me that at rains
Fill me with leaf smells and the smell of water
Spilling between dry leaves into the ground,
And afterwards in sunlight seem to push
And thrust and fumble through me : we are deep,
Deeper than trees and grasses, in the earth,
And we'll destroy ourselves if we tear out
Our roots from her.

C A I N :

And if we grow like trees
We will destroy ourselves. We are not trees,
Eve, we are men. And we must live like men,

A C T T H R E E · N O B O D A D D Y

Serving the god within us, not the god
In trees. I would tear out my flesh to go
Free of his earth, that, though it covered me,
Could never touch me, never hold me, never
Change me to earth—

(As Cain talks Abel comes through a gateway in the wall at the left. He is much younger than Cain and wears only a sort of breech cloth of skins. He walks gracefully like an animal with his head bent a little forward, looking out from under his brows sidewise. Over his shoulder he carries a live sheep which struggles a little in its bonds. He looks momentarily at Cain and Eve and then turns to the boulder on the left of the field laying his burden upon it.)

E V E :

Hush, Cain !

C A I N :

He has the look

His eyes have in the night when he stares out
Watching the dark—a sort of listening,
A sort of silence in his eyes. Speak to him.

E V E :

Abel !

(Abel turns his head.)

C A I N :

They say it rains in Eden, Abel.

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T T H R E E

A B E L :

Yes, in the night it rained there. I have been
As far as where you see the sword that turns
Though no hand turns it.

C A I N : *(Startled.)*

When !

A B E L :

I am just come.

E V E :

What did you see there, Abel?

A B E L :

Green.

C A I N :

Yes, green,
Green leaves in Eden. But was—no one there?

A B E L :

There was a wind there. Wind ! There was a
wind—
It came to meet me. I was in the wind.
It came to call to me : I came, I came—
No, there was no one there. I called to him.
I called his name. But he was not in Eden.
So then I knew where he had gone, and now—
Now I shall speak to him.

C A I N :

You must speak loud :
The sky is farther off than Eden.

A C T T H R E E · N O B O D A D D Y

A B E L :

No,

He will come here to me.

C A I N :

And you will tell him
It does not rain enough.

E V E :

Why will he come?

A B E L :

Because the ram's blood dripping on the earth
Shall call for me.

C A I N :

You will not kill the ram !

A B E L :

Why not? It is my ram. I reared it.

C A I N :

Yes,

It is yours.

A B E L :

Why shall I not?

C A I N :

The ram has done
Nothing to harm you. It is not the ram
That brings the drouth here, Abel.

A B E L :

But his blood,
Because he is my best will end it. Look!

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T T H R E E

There is no mark upon him and his horns
Are beautiful. I think god will be pleased
To have my ram, and he will speak with me.

C A I N :

Yes, he will laugh, he will rejoice to smell
The blood of a dead ram. He will be glad—
I think he will, my brother, for he makes
Hands that can spill it.

A B E L :

What will you give him, Cain?
What will you offer to him?

C A I N :

I have beans
Killed in the drouth he sends us. Could they
please him?
Or shall I offer him the withered corn
That rattles in the wind its dry dead bones?
He has destroyed it all.

A B E L :

You do not speak
The way your eyes look, Cain. You do not love him.
You hate him in your eyes. But when he comes—

E V E :

What will you say to him if—when he comes?
What will you ask him, Abel?

A C T T H R E E · N O B O D A D D Y

A B E L :

Beyond the sword.

To go past

E V E :

The sword that keeps the way?

A B E L :

Yes, I will ask him that.

C A I N :

To go back to Eden?

A B E L :

Yes, to go back.

(He turns and crosses toward the stone.)

C A I N :

You are a mad-man, Abel.

You are the son of Adam ; Do you think
God will befriend you? But if he should hear
And let you go would you be happy then?
You would be happier if you could lie
Crumpled again within the womb that bore you
Than you would be in Eden. We cannot go
Back into earth.

A B E L :

He will throw down the walls
That rise round Eden. His hand is a strong hand.
He raised the skies. He made the sun and moon.
His hand scooped up the mountains. He is strong.

N O B O D A D D Y . A C T T H R E E

If we bow down our necks beneath his hand
Then he will harken to us.

C A I N :

If we bow
We'll never stand upright on earth again.
The things that serve him go on knuckle bones
Turning their backs upon the light. Crawl, crawl,
Crawl if you love him. On your hands and knees
Crawl back to Eden. Bow like a beast, he'll give you
Water enough. I'd rather die of thirst
A man and standing as a man than drink
The spring of Pishon on my belly. Stoop,
Stoop and be fed. I will not.

A B E L :

He is strong.
His wrath is terrible. When he cries out
The leaves fall, the trees are winnowed. His eyes
Are as the stars with anger. Fear him, Cain.
Fear him and bow to him.

C A I N :

Not if he shook
The earth to make me. Lie in your own fear:
Give him your ram. Why don't you call to him
To kill it for you? He has strength to kill.
You cannot. See, it lifts its head to you

ACT THREE · NOBODADDY

Trusting you. Only god can kill the things
That trust him. Ah, you cannot kill it, Abel !

(Abel picks up the knife and lifting it first toward the sun drives it into the throat of the ram. Cain screams out.)

No! No! Ah, Abel, look. His blood spurts out,
See, it is on my hands, it burns.

ABEL:

Kneel down!

(Abel cups his hands to the blood flowing from the ram's throat and kneeling in front of the stone spills it upon the earth. Cain, close beside him, watches him intently. After a silence Abel begins to speak in a low monotonous voice.)

Drink, earth. You were thirsty, earth. I give you
drink.

I am the son of Adam, hear me, earth.

I am the ram's blood : drink, O drink me, earth.

Through all your veins, throughout your secret veins

Let me be poured. O let me cry in you.

Let me flood inward where the hidden one

Waits at the root of darkness: where the word

Is uttered darkly let my voice be heard.

Until he hears, until he speaks to me.

(Abel bows his head to the earth, silent. Cain covers his face with his hands.)

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T T H R E E

CAIN :

Something I know—something I half remember
That reaches hands to me to drag me down
Grovelling. Blood—of a ram. I do not fear it,
I say I do not fear it. I will stand
Although the trees fall down to him. Cry out,
Cry louder, Abel, he is far away ;
Cry till you split your throat. He cannot hear you.

*(Abel plunges his hands into the pooled blood of
the ram and sprinkles it upon the ground speaking
again with mouth close to the withered grass. As
he speaks low clouds gather slowly on the western
horizon.)*

ABEL :

I am your lover, Earth. Why are you still?
I am your lover, do you know me not?
Have you forgotten how, on Gihon's hill,
At mid-day on the tree-less hill, the hot
Bare hill of Gihon, the expectant thrill
Of fingers moving—did you answer then?
And will not now? And will not speak again?

CAIN :

As though my body tied still to the womb
That feeds it—that has food for me no more—
Cried out! O Abel crying to the earth
You are the flesh that wraps me and your fears

ACT THREE · NOBODADDY

Darken about me as an unknown something,
Touched in the night, darkens the scared brain
Until it drives itself beyond itself
Free. O free ! I will go free. I will
Break through this Abel in me and go free.

(The western sky is now covered with rolling low clouds which mount rapidly sending ahead across the sun a thin film of haze so that the desert is filled with a strange, rayless, colorless light. Abel seeing it, rises and moves rhythmically chanting in a voice at first slow and measured but quickly increasing in intensity. Cain crouches back upon the stone watching the storm. Eve throws herself upon the ground.)

ABEL:

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T T H R E E

Swirl of windy shimmering slashing through the
trees,
And Rain,— Rain,— Rain,— He has heard,— He
sees !

(There is a crash of thunder. Abel throws himself upon his knees. Cain, his back pressed to the stone, lifts his face to the sky.)

C A I N :

Howl ! Howl ! Cough out your angry fires ! Beat
down
The air with anger ! I will stand here still.
I am no breed of yours. I am the man,
Cain, and the man's son that you made to serve you.
See how I serve you ! See how I bow my head—

*(The thunder answers. There is a rush of wind.
As the sound thins the voice of Abel like the voice
of a man talking in sleep.)*

T H E V O I C E O F A B E L :

The word of god within the thunder saying
Because I heard the prayer of my servant, Abel,
Because I had respect unto his prayer,
Are you thus wroth, are you thus cast down, Cain ?
If you do well shall it not be accepted ?
But if you do not well it is a sin
Crouches before your door and unto you
Is its desire—

A C T T H R E E · N O B O D A D D Y

C A I N :

Abel did well to kill
A ram that trusted him smearing its blood
Over his hands. And I, I did not well
To give you nothing when you'd taken all.
I do not know your well and your not well.
I do not know your justice. Let me go.
Keep your bowed Abel to make sacrifice
And pray to you but only let me go.
There is a way beyond this to that land
That I have seen sometimes as from a hill
Climbing into the light, another light,
Another air, an air that I could breathe—
Oh, let me go. Oh, sever this thick vein
That knots me to the body of the earth,
That cannot feed me now, and let me go.

A B E L : *(He crawls to Cain's side.)*

Kneel Cain ! Bow down your head !
Kneel down ! Kneel down !
Can you not see within the flickering dark
And through the running shadows of the rain
Tremendous wings drive onward or beneath
The stumbling clouds the rush of furious
Unearthly horse ? Bow down your head to him
Before he kills us with his thunder. Kneel !
Cry out to him for mercy ! He is god,
He is the maker of the earth ; Bow down !

NOBODADDY : ACT THREE

CAIN: (*Starting to his feet.*)

Take off your hands from me. Because you fear
Must I fear too? Because you are a thing
Of earth and water must I likewise be
Water and earth? You are that root of me
That ties itself far down in the old slime
From which he took us. But I will not have
Roots in the earth. I am a man to walk--
Take off your hands from me.

(Abel clings to Cain's legs, dragging him down. Cain's hand upon the altar closes about the sacrificial knife. Raising it he strikes violently at Abel who falls forward on the earth.)

E V E : What have you done?

Cain, you have killed him. Abel, O my son,
Will you not say my name—not once—not once—
Not even dying? Have you no need of me?
There was a name you called me long ago
Before you learned to hate the name of Eve.
I have not changed—these are the breasts you sucked.
These are her arms—O Abel look at me,
Turn back your eyes and look at me. Not now!
Not ever now. Cain, Cain, what have you done.
Look! You have killed him, killed him. Do you hear?
This is your brother, Cain, this dead thing. No!
No! Look at it! Look down at it! The rain

A C T T H R E E . N O B O D A D D Y

Mixes his blood with blood of the dead beast—
Do you not hear?

CAIN :

He does not strike at me.
He does not kill me. Am I grown so small
Your lashing fires cannot destroy me now?
See, I stand facing you. I do not hide.
I do not turn my face. I am the man,
Cain—who would never bow his head to you,
Cain, who has cut through flesh
and bone that made
One body with your flesh and now is free,
And now cries out against you and will cry
So long as he has breath.

No word. No sound.
Only the thunder farther off that dulls
Dumbed into silence. Is there no one there—
Behind the low clouds nothing—
I have killed
Your priest. I have profaned your sacrifice.
I stand against you cursing you. Lift up,
Lift up your hand and slay me.

Dripping rain,
Low, dragging, empty clouds, ravelling mist
Concealing nothing. Have I struck against
Nothing—the wind? Yet I will find him.

God!

N O B O D A D D Y · A C T T H R E E

Where are you, god? Where are you, god?

Speak to me—

*(Cain runs out blindly through the drizzling rain
and is lost in the darkness. Eve bows her head
over the body of Abel.)*

T H E E N D

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